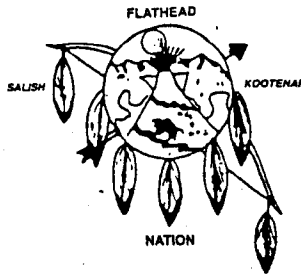


THE CONFEDERATED SALISH AND KOOTENAI TRIBES
OF THE FLATHEAD NATION



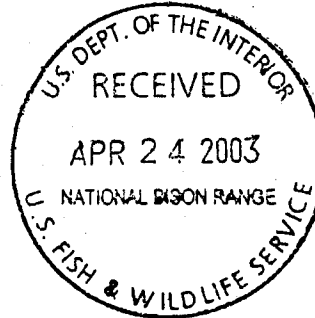
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TRIBAL COUNCIL MEMBERS:

D. Fred Matt - Chairman
Jami Hamel - Vice Chair
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Elmer "Sonny" Morigeau
Charles D. "Denny" Orr
Ron Trahan



April 23, 2003

Honorable Gale Norton, Secretary
Office of the Secretary
U.S Department of the Interior
1849 "C" Street N.W., MS7229-MIB
Washington D.C. 20240

Dave Wiseman, Project Leader
National Bison Range Complex
132 Bison Range Road
Moiese, MT 59824

RE: Letter to initiate the negotiation phase to administer the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service programs located on the Flathead Indian Reservation pursuant to 25 CFR Part 1000

Dear Secretary Norton:

The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) provided the Department of the Interior a letter on February 26, 2003 expressing our interest to manage the properties of the National Bison Range Complex located entirely on the Flathead Indian Reservation. This letter was submitted pursuant to the provisions contained in 25 CFR Section 1000.169 and began the information phase of the negotiation process for an Annual Funding Agreement. The CSKT received a packet of information from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on March 31, 2003. We continue to review the contents and may need to request additional information or clarification of the information provided in the future.

Please consider this letter to be formal notification by the CSKT to enter the negotiation phase for an Annual Funding Agreement with the Department of the Interior, U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, for the operation and management of the National Bison Range and the ancillary properties (NBR) located on the reservation. The CSKT submit this pursuant to the provisions of 25 CFR 1000.173.

The CSKT are interested in negotiating to operate the full range of activities provided at the NBR, which is all programs, services, activities and functions provided at the NBR and ancillary properties excluding the mutually agreed upon "inherent federal functions". As was discussed with Deputy Secretary Steve Griles, the CSKT will forego, for the immediate negotiations, the

law enforcement activities. Based on the information provided, it is our understanding that a number of employees may have law enforcement functions as collateral duties. We will require additional information to determine an appropriate staffing pattern for this activity and others to ensure coordination with the other functions we are negotiating to operate.

The NBR has cultural, historic and geographic significance to CSKT in that there are significant cultural sites located therein and the land was formerly owned in trust for the CSKT. Also, the bison that reside on the NBR are descendants from a herd, which originated on the reservation. Finally, the NBR is located entirely within the exterior boundaries of the Flathead Indian Reservation.

The CSKT designate Mr. D. Fred Matt, Chairman - Tribal Council to be the CSKT Tribal lead negotiator. We further request to retain the opportunity to identify technical assistance and information as needed during the negotiation process.

Sincerely,

CONFEDERATED SALISH AND KOOTENAI TRIBES



D. Fred Matt, Chairman
Tribal Council

Copies sent to:

Paul Hoffman, Deputy Assistant Secretary Fish, Wildlife and Parks
Pat Durham, Native American Liaison, USFWS